

**Remarks**

This Preliminary Amendment cancels original claims 1-9, without prejudice, and cancels substitute claims 1-9, without prejudice, in the underlying PCT Application No. PCT/DE98/03074. The Preliminary Amendment adds new claims 10-18. The new claims do not add new matter to the application but do conform the claims to U.S. Patent and Trademark Office rules.

The amendments to the specification and abstract are to conform the specification and abstract to U.S. Patent and Trademark Office rules. The amendments to the specification and abstract do not introduce new matter into the application.

The underlying PCT application includes a Search Report dated May 4, 1999, and an International Preliminary Examination Report dated January 28, 2000, copies of which are submitted herewith.

Applicants assert that the present invention is new, non-obvious, and useful. Consideration and allowance of the claims are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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